

McCallum Bagpipes

By Brett Tidswell

This year I was competing with the Strathclyde Police Pipe Band in a number of competitions including the World Pipe Band Championships. The band is playing McCallum chanters and I was issued with a set of McCallum AB4 deluxe bagpipes. I found it a very steady and full sounding instrument with great depth of tone.



Stuart McCallum also plays with the band and when he offered to show me around the factory I was delighted to accept. The factory is located in the Moorfield Industrial Estate in Kilmarnock. Whilst I was there, the factory was undergoing some renovations and expansion. This is a big enterprise and the factory utilises all modern production methods. Looking at the photograph below, you could not miss the premises.



The entrance to the facility opens into a display area and shop, featuring Bagpipes, Reeds, Drums, Highland Wear and much more.



Beyond the shop is the factory. A well appointed modern facility that is absolutely spotless. Here the company makes bagpipes, small pipes, pipe chanters, practice chanters, their own mounts and silverwork etc.

McCallum uses CNC lathes to precisely manufacture some products such as chanters.



Wood billets are bored and turned on a CNC lathe (below left) to form a basic shape and these are then stored in the drying room (below right) to further season the wood.



Further shaping of the parts is then later undertaken.



The parts are then beaded, combed and finished by hand.



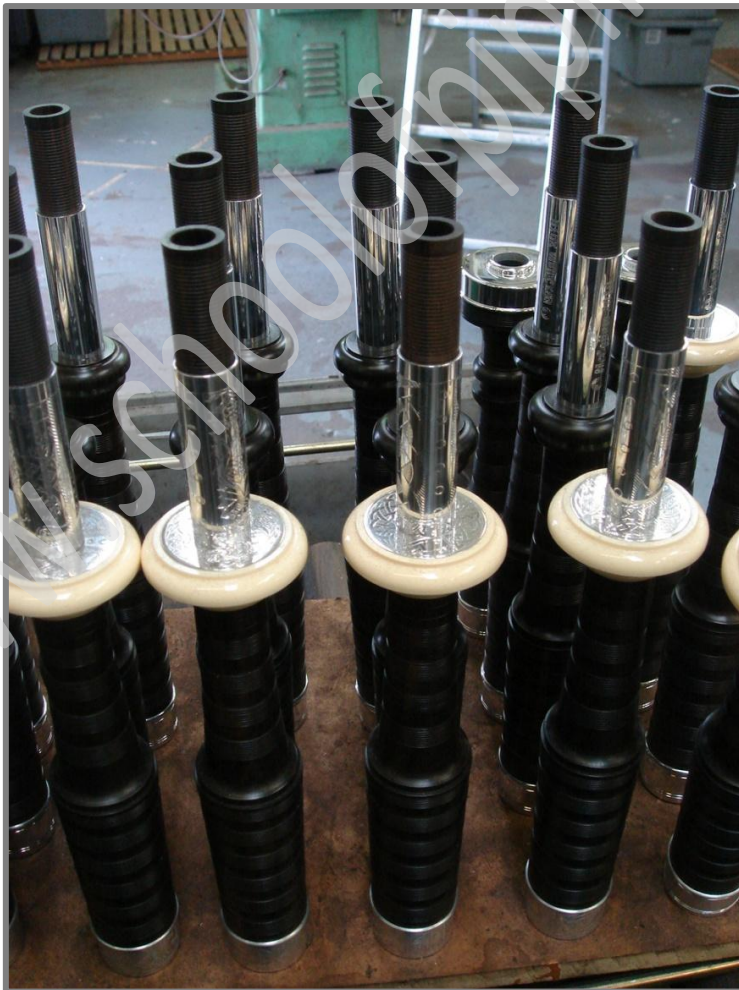
The makers at McCallum manufacture their own mounts in nickel and also sterling silver.



The mounts are either machine engraved on site or sent for hand engraving.



All mounts and components are now threaded and fitted onto the bagpipe.



Once completed the bagpipe is then hemped, assembled and tested.



Small pipes are also made at the factory and are seen here during the production stages.



McCallum bagpipes once complete have then gone on to be played at the highest of levels in all spheres of the piping world.



Brett Tidswell playing a full set of McCallum AB4 deluxe Bagpipes at the World Pipe Band Championships 2010 with the Strathclyde Police Pipe Band.

We would like to thank Stuart McCallum and Kenny McLeod for their hospitality and for allowing us to look around their factory. More articles like this one can be found at:

www.schoolofpiping.com